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Memorandum

To: **LaDonna Turner, Site Assessment Manager**
Technical and Enforcement Branch
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6

From: **Dana Bahar, Manager, Superfund Oversight Section**
Ground Water Quality Bureau, New Mexico Environment Department.

Date: **September 10, 2009**

Subject: **Pre-CERCLIS Screening Assessment of Davenport Mine, McKinley County, New Mexico: Further action under CERLCA Recommended**

Site name	Davenport Mine				
City	not applicable	**State**	New Mexico	**Zip code**	not applicable
County	McKinley				
Latitude	35° 20' 27.10"	**Longitude**	107° 49' 15.38"		

Site physical description: The Davenport Mine currently has waste rock piles and a collapsed frame structure. Little other evidence of the mine remains.

Site identification: Potential alluvial ground water contamination within the Grants Mineral Belt was identified because background standards established for the contaminants of concern for ongoing remedial action associated with the Homestake Mining Company NPL site (CERCLIS NMD0007860935) are generally higher than Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs). NMED conducted sampling of private residential wells in subdivisions located in the vicinity of the HMC site, and found that the majority had one or more contaminant concentrations exceeding MCLs.

Site summary: Observations made during NMED's Site reconnaissance are shown on the accompanying figures. One waste rock pile has slightly elevated radioactivity (230 counts per second [cps]; background=28 cps).

Targets: Residences are located near the junction of State Hwy. 605 and 509, approximately 2.3 air-miles east-northeast of the Site. Another residence is located along Haystack Road approximately 1.5 air-miles southwest of the Site, from which another

residence is visible further to the west. Other potential targets may include cattle and wildlife.

Closest well sampled to date: irrigation well SMC-22 (1.1 air-miles; 48.2 µg/l total uranium in 2009 sampling [total uranium Maximum Contaminant Level=30 µg/l]).

Site ownership and Potentially Responsible Parties: Surface rights reportedly are held by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Bailey and Fife reportedly last operated the mine in 1966.

File review: NMED staff reviewed the following files:

- Database compiled by Mining and Minerals Division of the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (07/20/2007).
- Anderson, Orin J., 1980. "Abandoned or inactive uranium mines in New Mexico".
- McLemore, Virginia T. and William L. Chenoweth, 1991. "Uranium mines and deposits in the Grants district, Cibola and McKinley Counties, New Mexico." New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources Open-file report 353.
- Rappaport, Linda, "Uranium deposits of the Poison Canyon ore trend, Grants District," in "Geology and technology of the Grants Uranium Region, 1963. State Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources.
- U.S. Geological Survey, 1997. "Gallup quadrangle NURE HSSR study." OFR-97-492.

Site reconnaissance: NMED conducted a Site reconnaissance on June 3, 2009.

Recommendations: A release of CERCLA hazardous substances has been documented at the site. NMED recommends further investigation under CERCLA to assess the risk posed by the site using the Hazard Ranking System.

NMED recommends that the investigation include the following:

1. Sample sediments along drainages to characterize extent of Site-derived waste dispersion.
2. Investigate and characterize ground water impacts.

In addition NMED recommends the following actions be performed to address immediate threats to public health and the environment:

1. Remove waste with elevated radioactivity.

Figure 1: Davenport Mine—measurements made on June 3, 2009

"Px" reference the location of photographs on pages following.

P1: Davenport Mine collapsed frame structure